



NEWS RELEASE.....

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FLORES AND FLORES WIN “CHICAGO STYLE”

(Navy Pier, Chicago, IL) More than 4,300 gymnasts from 30 states and four countries competed at the IGI “Chicago Style” meet last weekend, but it was two sisters from Traverse City who brought home gold medals for first place all-around in their respective divisions.

Level 6 gymnast Olivia Flores captured 1st place on bars and floor and placed 3rd on beam and 4th on vault to give her an all-around 1st place finish with a score of 37.25. Second behind her on the podium was Rachel Ovalle, also on the YMCA’s Level 6 team. Ovalle won vault with a score of 9.45, took second behind Flores on bars, and placed in the top 10 on beam and floor to round out her scoring.

With Kayla Jackson’s solid 5th place all-around finish (2nd place on vault and beam), and top five scores from Samantha Neddo on bars and floor, the YMCA’s Level 6 team finished in 6th place all-around.

At Level 7, Francie Flores matched sister Olivia’s 1st place finishes on bars and floor, and scored a 9.625 vault for 2nd place in that event. Flores also turned in a 4th place beam routine en route to her Level 7 all-around 1st place championship performance with a score of 38.025.

“For two girls from our Y team to bring home all-around gold medals from the biggest meet in the world on an international stage is quite a feat,” said YMCA

gymnastics director Betsy Van Deinse, “but it’s even more special that they’re sisters.” Van Deinse added, “And we’ll be an even stronger team when we get the other sisters back,” referring to twins Amy and Patricia Davis, both sidelined with injuries for the Chicago meet.

The YMCA’s Level 7 team placed 6th all-around, thanks to Annie Gerstner’s 2nd place all-around finish behind Flores, and a near medal sweep by Kendra Benak. Gerstner cemented her position as one of the top vaulters in the country with a 9.7 1st place performance, and then finished 3rd on floor, 4th on bars, and in 6th place on beam.

Led by Gerstner, the Level 7 gymnasts won 1st place as a team on vault with a 28.85 combined score. The team’s combined score of 28.275 was good enough for 2nd place on floor, and a bars combined score of 28.525 earned them 3rd place as a team on that event.

Benak began the meet with three falls on beam, but did not let that affect her other events as she bounced back to take 1st on vault, 1st on bars, and 1st on floor.

“We were so proud of the way Kendra got determined and focused after a bad start,” said coach Jennifer Van Deinse. “Some girls would have just given up after that, but Kendra really turned it on.” Benak finished in 5th place all-around behind Flores and Gerstner.

Five gymnasts also competed for the YMCA team at Chicago at Level 5. Jade Turner place 3rd all-around behind a 2nd place performance on beam and a 3rd place finish on floor. Annemarie Jenkins and Kayla Brady each placed 7th all-around in their respective age groups, Darby Drake placed 12th, and Sierra Klein’s strong 4th place bars routine and 16th place all-around helped the YMCA Level 5 team take 12th place all-around.

The YMCA gymnasts next compete in Rochester, Michigan, March 4 – 6.

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Level 5 team, from l to r: Jade Turner, Kayla Brady, Annemarie Jenkins, Sierra Klein, Darby Drake



Our Level 6 team, from l to r: Samantha Neddo, Kayla Jackson, Olivia Flores, Rachel Ovalle



Our Level 7 team, from l to r: Kendra Benak, Annie Gerstner, Francie Flores.